**DO YOU KNOW.?**

Did you ever wonder whether developers contribute to the local community when they build new homes ? Can they just build a number of houses and walk away? The answer is no they cannot .

Acts of Parliament help protect local amenities and give local authorities the power to use money from the developers to fund works to enhance the infrastructure of localities that have been impacted by the development of new homes.

Sefton Council, like all other councils, can use this Act to their advantage and use significant amounts of money to help mitigate the impact of these developments on the locality.

Let us take a closer look at Section 106 of this Act

**Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990**

Section 106 (S106) Agreements are legal agreements between Local Authorities and developers; these are linked to planning permissions and can also be known as planning obligations.

Section 106 agreements are drafted when it is considered that a development will have significant impacts on the local area that cannot be moderated by means of conditions attached to a planning decision.

For example, a new residential development can place extra pressure on the social, physical and economic infrastructure which already exists in a certain area. A planning obligation will aim to balance the pressure created by the new development with improvements to the surrounding area ensuring that where possible the development would make a positive contribution to the local area and community.

**What the Section 106 Agreement will cover**

When a planning application is submitted to the Council, they will assess the application to determine whether the development would cause a significant impact to the area and community.

The S.106 will vary depending on the nature of the development and based on the needs of the community. (Some Parish Councils have Neighbourhood Plans which can highlight the residents needs for their locality )

The most common obligations include:-

* Public Open Space. e g local parks, open spaces for recreation purposes
* Affordable Housing
* Education
* Highways
* Town Centre Improvements
* Health
* Recreation Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)

Residents across Sefton have witnessed a very large number of homes being built on both brown field and greenfield sites by developers.

These will have significant impact on all the obligations listed above. But, how would residents expect the money from these developments situated in our locality to be spent to improve our locality. What visible tangible impact should this Section 106 money have on our community? How much money will be allocated ?

Each year the Council is legally required to publish its Infrastructure Funding Statement. **In its statement for 2020-2021 Sefton Council showed that they received £365,314.93 under planning obligations**.

**They also reported that they received £3,227,778.83 under planning obligations prior to 2020-2021 which has yet to be assigned to specific projects. Of this sum, £379,000 was to be spent towards the provision of affordable housing, but has not been spent.**

**Sefton Council also reported that during 2020-21 they allocated but did not spend £437,252.69 of money received via planning obligations. This money was for various local projects for tree planting, greenspaces and local environmental improvements across various Wards. To understand the scale of this allocation, it is worth noting that Blundellsands Ward was allocated (but did not spend) £52,498.48. Meanwhile the Labour controlled Derby Ward was allocated £86,628.18 which remains unspent.**

The Council ask volunteers for funding for parks, boating pools, play equipment, railings for Merrilocks Park etc. and yet, the money is there to spend but they refuse to spend it on the residents it is meant to serve.

Little transparency is evident in the workings of our council. They hope that we remain ignorant of the truth but their complacency in many matters is slowly being revealed.